The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news, comment and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, legislative, and political fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1718 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 11

WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

FACING the FACTS
With PHILIP PEARL

The rapid depletion of our natural, material resources due to the heavy demands of war has given rise to concern in high quarters. Efforts are being made to concentrate public attention on the dwindling oil supply of our country and to drum up support for financing pipe lines across Africa. Similar sob stories appear in print with regard to the loss of our reserves of metals and minerals.

But in all this talk you will seldom, if ever, hear any mention of the effect of the war on our human resources.

Strange, isn't it? How can people get so excited and alarmed over the loss of oil or coal or iron ore and remain silent and indifferent to the effect upon our country of the loss of manpower? What sort of society do we live in where material things take precedence over human life?

The drain upon America's human resources which this war has occasioned cannot be measured only in terms of lives lost on the battlefields, of arms and legs shot off by shrapnel or of minds destroyed by the horrors of warfare.

Child Labor Causes Heavy Toll

The widespread employment of child labor will also cause a heavy toll. The depopulation of our schools and colleges will deprive the next generation of needed technical and professional experts. The drafting of young men from factories will result in a loss of workmen skilled in the various crafts.

But no one seems to take these things seriously. People don't stop to realize that our economy is not run by machinery but by men. Do you remember the line:—"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, where wealth accumulates and men decay?" Never were the words of the poet more applicable!

Surely the lessons we have learned from the operation of the Selective Service System should wake us up to the dangerous depletion and deterioration of our human resources! Surely the high percentages of those rejected by the draft because they are physically or mentally unfit should warn us of even greater danger in the post-war period! Surely the deplorable fact that in this day and age many thousands of American young men cannot read or write should shock us out of our complacency!

Last January when we attended the AFL Executive Council meeting at Miami, we saw thousands of young men in the Officers Training Schools cavorting on the tropical beach and basking in the health-giving sun. We thought it was a wonderful thing that the Government could afford to bring those young men to such a salubrious climate for training. And the thought struck us that if the Government could afford to do this to promote the war effort, surely it ought to be able to bring thousands of slum children to Florida in the post-war winters to build up their health and save untold suffering and loss of life.

Sound Social Insurance

That may sound like a utopian or unpractical project. But it appears to be a sound, common-sense investment to us. If a country is only as strong as its citizens, if a country is only wealthy because of its human resources, surely it ought to develop those resources to the highest extent.

Education, health-building and training are the means by which we develop human beings to capability of rendering greater service to their fellow citizens and to their country.

If we neglect our human resources, if we reject social insurances, and concentrate only on material wealth, we are contributing to the decay and disintegration of our civilization.

This doesn't pretend to be a weighty treatise on a complex subject. We're just sounding off at random. And the thought occurs to us at the moment that there is another angle to which we have not referred. Many of the workers now engaged in war production and toiling at a high and sustained pace through long hours without sufficient recreation are going to be thrown on the inside just as a machine that is overworked burns out, just as a soldier who has served too long at the front burns out.

When the war ends, these long hours will have to be sharply reduced. This is necessary not only as an economic measure, to spread the available supply of jobs, but as a health measure. Labor should get set now to resent its drive for the thirty-hour week in the post-war period.

If victory in this war is going to mean anything to the millions who have given blood and sweat and tears to achieve it, America will have to give more attention in the future to the conservation and strengthening of its human resources, as we have indicated.

Six States Attempting Nullification Of Wage Hour Act, Walling Charges

New York City.—Direct efforts by six States to nullify the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the lowering of child labor standards by one-half of the States were charged by L. Metcalfe Walling, director of the wage and hour and public contracts divisions of the United States Department of Labor, in his report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1943.

Seeking a danger of deterioration of wage and work standards with the end of hostilities, Mr. Walling suggested that preparations be made now to strengthen existing legislation, including the lifting of the present minimum of 40 cents an hour to 60 cents.

Mr. Walling's report disclosed that nearly $17,000,000 in restitution of illegally withheld wages was paid to 390,000 employees in 20,000 industrial and business establishments last year, with more than one-third of the cases involving failure to pay the minimum of 30 to 40 cents an hour.

"The slackening of Federal enforcement (through a 20 per cent appropriation cut) is particularly serious now," Mr. Walling declared. "At the very time that the Congress was reducing the appropriation in the spring of 1943, six States were passing laws that discriminated against wage earners, reducing by periods of as little as six months the time in which a worker may sue to collect wages legally due him, while not similarly reducing the period in which the butcher or baker or landlord may sue the worker.

"Some of this legislation refers specifically to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Some may be unconstitutional. All is aimed at its defeat in practice.

"In addition, one State has had a one-year statute of limitations applying to claims under the act since the early days in which it was put into force, and another State has had a one-year statute of limitations applying to claims under its own minimum wage statute for a much longer period."

Mr. Walling stressed the importance of the Fair Labor Standards Act and its effective enforcement as essential to the protection of standards after the war, when "it is probable that wage earners in all brackets will have their total earnings reduced because of reductions in hours of work."

He expressed the opinion that it would take a 50-cent minimum wage today to equal the minimum standards of decency set by Congress in 1938 with its 40-cent minimum wage and suggested that studies be begun immediately on the basis of which he would make appropriate recommendations a year hence. He also urged consideration of extending the minimum guarantees provided for the employes of industrialized farms and to those industries in which substantial coverage already exists and unfair competition between intrastate and interstate enterprises in cases where the differential is substantially affected the latter.

On the question of child labor, Mr. Walling said it had become an increasingly difficult problem with the necessary increase in the war labor forces. His report disclosed that about 1,000,000 more boys and girls 14 to 17 years old were at work in April, 1943, than would have been employed except for the war.

Kaiser Urges Post-War Housing Plan To Provide Employment For Millions

Chicago.—Henry J. Kaiser shipbuilder and contractor, urged all sections of the housing industry to get together on plans for a country-wide building program after the war to provide employment for mass employment.

Speaking at a dinner-meeting of the National Conference on Post-War Housing, Mr. Kaiser said:

"Housing is one of the major prospects for employment. Present requirements, estimates and expressed desires could keep millions employed for years."

Asserting that everything is propitious for an unparalleled revival of building activity after the war, Mr. Kaiser said that it could be accomplished in some part by individual initiative, "but the undertaking is so vast that there must be a joint effort in which the Federal Government, the States, municipalities, labor unions, insurance companies and industry take an active part."

"Out of the shambles of war in England, Russia and Europe," he continued, "there are certain to arise new cities—modern, safe, efficient and beautiful. Can we afford to be laggards in such a march of progress?"

"Many of us," he went on, "are aware that the extent to which we fail this challenge will be a direct invitation to the Federal Government to take over the job, which is fundamentally our own."

Praise For Labor

An unwonted flow of 'praise for the wartime achievements of American labor cascaded upon the editor's desk this week. Ordinarily we would handle these items separately, since they come from varied sources and places. But because we believe that they add up to a significant conclusion, we have wrapped them up in one package—and here it is:

From WPB Vice Chairman Keenan . . .

Chicago.—American workers have met every test during the war and "the liberty-loving peoples of the entire world owe them a great debt of gratitude," Joseph D. Keenan, vice chairman of the War Production Board, told the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems here.

"American war production has amazed the entire world and labor can rightly claim a great share of the credit for that flood of production," he said. "Workers have moved long distances to take war jobs, lived under crowded conditions, endured hardships and discomforts, and with but few exceptions have stayed on the job day in and day out to get a sufficient supply of munitions to our armed forces."

Lion's share of the praise belongs to union men and women, since 85 per cent of the war production has been turned out in union plants, he pointed out.

"Union leadership since the beginning of the defense program in 1940 has shown a willingness to meet every reasonable request the government has made," Keenan declared.

"Many unions have released some of their outstanding leaders to serve full time in war agency jobs. Since Pearl Harbor amazingly little time has been lost through strikes.

"The war is not yet won and we still have a long road ahead, but I do not fear the outcome. I know the nation can count on American workers and their leaders to intensify efforts to maintain and increase production until our flood of planes, ships, tanks and guns finally engulfs the Axis."

* * *

From The L-M. Exposition . . .

Washington, D. C.—Accustomed to abuse from press and radio, the nation's war workers found themselves the center of an unexpected shower of praise from speakers at the labor-management exposition in the nation's capital.

Perhaps the most significant commendation came from Brigadier General Hugh Minton, director of production for the War Department. Minton attributed the ability of the United Nations to take the offensive to the output of American workers.

"Our armed forces are grateful to those in government, management and labor, who have contributed so much to supply our army and other armies of the United Nations with superb fighting equipment," he said.

Chairman Donald M. Nelson of the War Production Board lauded particularly the valuable suggestions that have come from workers to improve and speed up output of war materials. Their contributions "are above and beyond the call of duty," he said.

"Tens of thousands of their ideas that have been studied, accepted and put into practice, have saved untold millions of man-hours, conserved vital materials and sped the weapons of war ever faster to our fighting men," Nelson added.

Even some newspapers chose the occasion to concede that the workers have been maligned. For example, the Washington "Post" in an editorial asserted it showed a "production miracle" had been performed, and admitted that strikes have been overplayed in the press while the solid achievements of labor were overlooked.

"Sometimes the steady story of teamwork between labor and management seems obscured by the sensational news of occasional disputes and walkouts," the paper said.

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From The Pennsylvania R. R. . . .

Railroad reports to stockholders usually are heavy reading, but an exception is that of the Pennsylvania for 1943, which appeared as advertising in many newspapers.

In addition to the financial details of operation, the report, signed by President A. J. Quinn, had this to say of the company's employes:

"The board takes pleasure in acknowledging the continued efficiency and loyalty of the employes, which made possible the handling of a volume of traffic exceeding that of any year in the history of the company.

"Some 44,468 employes of the system have entered the armed forces, serve in every part of the world, of whom 123 have made the supreme sacrifice. Many thousands of new employes have had to be trained to take their places, including 21,730 women who are now in the railroad service.

"To these seven men and women the employes as group excel; never have they met the burden more efficiently or more courageously."

* * *

From Another Railroad President . . .

William M. Jeffers, president of the Union Pacific Railroad, delivered an interesting talk at Boys' Town, Neb., Father Flanagan's remarkable training ground for making useful citizens out of homeless boys. In his speech, reported in "Labor," Mr. Jeffers said:

"In my 50 years of experience I have never seen worse weather than we have had this winter. Despite heavy handicaps, we have moved the heaviest traffic I have ever seen.

"That job was done by men in overalls, the type of men who have the industrial fortitude to get out and stay out, regardless of weather conditions, and get the job done."

He said there may be labor unions which have done things that are open to criticism, but insisted, "the labor I know—and these are men who work on the American railroads—are upheaded, strong minded American citizens."

"Labor unions properly led and directed are a help to industry. Don't get yourself mixed up in those cliques that cry that labor unions should be destroyed.

"I am the president of a great railroad, but I still carry my union card in the Brotherhood of Railroad Telegraphers. That should be evidence to anyone that I believe in labor unions.

"I emphasize that because so much has been said recently about the necessity of 'handling' labor. Labor can be 'handled' in this country if it is honestly, fairly and efficiently handled.

"We recently had a situation where some one thought it necessary for the army to take over the railroads. Possibly it was. But that didn't apply to the railroad men on the railroad of which I am president."

Jeffers sharply condemned newspapers, and politicians who try to set workers apart from other groups and to treat them as second-class citizens.

"Let's have no distinction between the ordinary workingman and the so-called big industrialist," he declared.

* * *

From Gen. Hale, USA 7th Air Corps . . .

Washington.—Workers in the American aircraft industry were highly praised by Major General Willis H. Hale, commanding general of the U. S. Army Seventh Air Force, during a review of the part played by the Air Force in recent operations in the Pacific.

General Hale, in Washington for a brief visit, told a press conference the performance of American planes was excellent and that they had proved their ability to take plenty of punishment.

"As a medium and heavy bomber team the Mitchell-Liberator combination in the Pacific is proving itself beyond our greatest expectations practically every day," he said.

"The planes fly shot up, through weather so turbulent it threatens to pull them apart. Almost never do they have fighter protection; the distances are too great. Frequently they must fight their way in and out from a target. Sometimes they are blasted full of holes; sometimes their motors are shot out, but just about always, if the wings stay on, they get home.

"The men and women who are building those airplanes deserve great credit."

News Briefs

AIRPLANE PRODUCTION SETS NEW HIGH MARK

American aircraft workers have done it again. During February they produced planes at an all-time record rate of 350 a day, for a total of 8,760, Chairman Charles E. Wilson of the Aircraft Production Board reported.

Wilson said that in terms of weight the total output was 4 per cent ahead of January, the previous high mark. Recalling that February was a "short" month, he implied that if it had been of normal length, the total number of planes would have passed the 9,000 mark.

MARINE CORPS COMMANDANT PRAISES RECORD OF LABOR

"One reason we are running well ahead of our Pacific timetable is that production of fighting ships for the Navy, and all the accessories that go with them, is far ahead of schedule. This tribute to labor's part in the war effort comes from Lieutenant General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC, Commandant of America's fighting Marines.

Continuing his comments on labor's production record, General Vandegrift said: "Generally speaking we have great praise and few complaints on those scores," but added that much "hard work" has to be done in the Pacific war theater.

FULL EMPLOYMENT HELD KEY TO WORLD PEACE

Washington, D. C.—Full employment and full production are twin keys to world peace in the post-war period.

A program of international economic collaboration aimed at using the keys was laid before the Senate in joint resolution introduced by Senators Elbert D. Thomas (D., Ut.), Harley M. Kilgore (D., W. Va.), and Harry S. Truman (D., Mo.).

The resolution would set up a foreign economic commission to serve as a "clearing house" for exchanging the views and opinions on economic policies. On it would be representatives of government, business, labor, agriculture and the public, all working through a single medium and building in an atmosphere of hope to open up new horizons for the economic progress of our own and other nations.

In a joint statement, the three Senators said "the future peace depends upon an economically healthy U. S. We cannot have economic health without a volume of foreign trade above anything we have ever had before.

The Senators warned that "the future peace depends on the abandonment of economic nationalism, of economic imperialism and autarchy (self-sufficiency) they and the extension of the Good Neighbor Policy and said that by doing so quickly "we can forestall the return of the forces of economic disaffection which eventually enlarge into world wars."

GLOBE SHIPYARDS LEAD AFL RED CROSS DRIVE

New York City.—First honors for speed and accomplishment in the AFL campaign in support of the Red Cross goes to the workers in the Globe Shipyards, Superior, Wis.

Three days after the opening of the Red Cross drive, the Globe Shipyards quota had been reached and surpassed. Over 1,500 contributors, belonging to the Shipbuilders Union, Local 1, Superior, have contributed $7,635.08, and it is expected that the total donation will exceed $8,000 before the close of the campaign.

ITALIAN LABOR UNIONS RESTORED BY ALLIES

New York City.—Trade unions in Sicily and the part of Italy occupied by the Allies are rapidly being reorganized along democratic lines following elections in Palermo, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy disclosed.

One of the first steps taken by the Allied Military Government, he said, was to abolish the whole fascist labor setup and clear the way for the re-establishments of democratic unions.

"An atmosphere favorable to the development of free labor unions has had to be created but at the same time the Army had to avoid any affirmative policy of unions which would be controlling the new unions to speed their development," he declared.

Accordingly, the policy has been to permit the unions to develop their own leadership and set their own policies. Efforts to form labor unions are handpicked by AMG. Under our encouragement, collective bargaining, involving elections in which workers selected their own representatives, were held in Sicily and Italy for the first time in more than twenty years. Labor disputes were settled by agreement between the parties with the officials of the labor offices acting as mediators."

AFL Refuses To Share Representation At Coming ILO Conference With CIO

Federation Will Not Participate Under Such Plan, Green Tells Roosevelt

Washington, D. C.—President William Green, notified President Roosevelt that the American Federation of Labor will not agree to share representation at the forthcoming ILO conference at Philadelphia with the CIO.

Mr. Green informed the President that a poll of the members of the AFL Executive Council showed they stood unanimously against any change in the traditional policy of our Government to appoint as the American workers' delegate to the ILO conference a representative nominated by the AFL.

For the past seven years Robert J. Watt, international representative of the AFL, has served as the American workers' delegate and is a member of the ILO governing body.

The issue of representation at the ILO meeting came into the open when Mr. Green made public a letter he sent to the White House. In this letter, Mr. Green disclosed that the President and Secretary of Labor Perkins had requested the AFL to share representation with the CIO on the basis of one-half vote for the AFL delegate and one-half vote for a CIO delegate.

Describing a showdown on this issue, Mr. Green served notice on the President that the AFL will refuse to participate in the ILO conference if a change in the method of representation "is forced or insisted upon." The letter said:

"In reporting to you upon the answer made by each member of the Executive Council, he assured I know it is the inclination and desire of each and all of them to respond favorably to any request you make. Because of this fact, I am confident that all of them were moved by a feeling of deep regret when they, as administrators of the American Federation of Labor, unanimously advised me they could not agree that representatives of the American Federation of Labor participate at the meeting of the International Labor Organization on the basis of equal representation to the American Federation of Labor and the German and Italian Fascist organizations.

"The basis of representation at periodical conferences of the International Labor Organization provides that two representatives from the government with one vote each or one representative from the most representative labor organization with one vote, and one delegate from employers with one vote, shall represent each nation affiliated with the International Labor Organization at conferences held by said International Labor Organization. It does not provide for division between two labor organizations, such as the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, might mean conflict and disagreement. The one group might cast their half vote in favor of and the other group one-half a vote in opposition to the vital proposal submitted for determination. Such an outcome would cause disunity and discord. The American Federation of Labor has participated in each and every conference of the International Labor Organization which has been held since its formation in 1919. At no time during that period has it been asked or urged upon to share labor representation in an International Labor Organization conference.

"The American Federation of Labor is still the most representative labor organization in the United States. The American Federation of Labor, as one of the founders of the International Labor Organization, has been inspired by a consciousness of responsibility for its development and success. The idea of labor being accorded the right to be represented at peace negotiations following the conclusion of World War No. 1 originated in the mind of Samuel Gompers who served so long and efficiently as president of the American Federation of Labor. He prepared and introduced at the convention of the American Federation of Labor held in November 1914, a resolution proposing a representative international Labor Conference at the same time and at the same place where the peace conference would be held. This resolution, circulated among the national labor centers, was the origin, the thought and purpose that resulted in the formation of the International Labor Commission. The late Samuel Gompers, representing labor in the United States, was designated as chairman of the Commission which prepared the draft plan later embodied in Section 16 of the Versailles Treaty.

"Surely in the light of all this historic service rendered by the American Federation of Labor, it could not be expected to share representation in an International Labor Organization conference with some other labor organization. If the one vote which labor is accorded at International Labor Organization conferences is to be divided with some other one labor organization, why as a matter of justice should it not be divided with other independent labor organizations? If the Congress of Industrial Organizations is to be accorded the right to share representation with the American Federation of Labor at the International Labor Organization Conference on the basis of one-half vote for the American Federation of Labor and one-half vote for the Congress of Industrial Organizations, why should not the one vote accorded labor be proportionately divided among other labor unions such as the Railway Brotherhoods, the United Mine Workers and other independent unions? Obviously such a procedure would create chaos. Any attempt, Mr. President, to accord the Congress of Industrial Organizations equal representation with the American Federation of Labor at the International Labor Organization Conference would create resentment among other labor organizations which feel they are entitled to representation also, if a change in labor representation at International Labor Organization conferences is to be made.

"Mr. President, the American Federation of Labor cannot agree to share responsibility with any other labor organization at meetings of the International Labor Organization. We cannot participate in meetings of the International Labor Organization if such a change of representation is forced or insisted upon. We cannot, under any circumstances change our attitude in this respect. The American Federation of Labor vigorously contends that the traditional policy which originated at the Versailles Peace Conference and which has been followed without change ever since, shall continue. It maintains that it has the right to representation in International Labor Organization conferences, and we hope and trust that you will accept this point of view."

Labor Calls On Army To Correct Lying Propaganda Fed To Troops

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor called upon the War Department to take "positive steps" to inform the men in the armed forces of the truth regarding labor's war record.

A delegation from the AFL and CIO held a conference with Under-Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson in an effort to prevail upon the armed forces to take the initiative in this regard.

AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany presented the gist of the case when he asked Mr. Patterson these questions:

1—Are the members of the armed forces now misinformed as to labor's participation in the war effort?

2—If they are so misinformed, doesn't the War Department have a direct responsibility to tell the servicemen the truth?

Secretary Patterson insisted that the service publications do not distort labor news. He submitted evidence that these publications print stories about labor's production record along with news of strikes. He indicated he felt that stories about servicemen's resentment against labor have been exaggerated and do not represent the views of the average man in uniform.

While Secretary Patterson did not agree that it is up to the War Department to correct any misapprehensions regarding labor the troops may be suffering from, he indicated willingness to consider any specific suggestions organized labor cares to submit.

Among the suggestions pending are ways and means of bringing labor publications such as the American Federationist to the attention of the troops in a manner consistent with labor-conscious but non-official publications which are available in military camps. The hitch, at present, is that the armed forces distribute to camp libraries only such publications as are requested by the servicemen.

Support for labor's point of view on this issue came unexpectedly from the Washington Post which declared editorially that "there seems merit" in labor's plea that the War Department give the troops a "more positive picture" of labor's accomplishments.

"Undoubtedly, press reports have tended to dramatize, and perhaps overplay, the occasional stoppages that have occurred in war production," the editorial said. "It is precisely because these are extraordinary that they are newsworthy. It is a good deal more difficult to make good copy out of the day-to-day story of devoted effort in the mines and mills. Yet the record shows that, in the main, this devotion has been very high. There is simply no other basis on which the miracle of American production can be explained.

"Certainly the morale of men in the field will be heightened rather than hurt by a knowledge that they are being faithfully backed up at home."